DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 052 424 AC 010 448

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TITLE New Careers: A Challenge to Adult Education.
PUB DATE Apr 69
NOTE 19p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education, *Career Planning, *Educational Programs, *Job Training, *Models, Professional Occupations, Underemployed, Unemployed

ABSTRACT

New Careers is a training program for the underemployed or unemployed. It has two objectives: helping the poor help themselves and the democratization of society. The first has been more effectively dealt with and is of greater relevance to adult educators. Current strategy is based on the belief that even professional jobs can be broken down into simple tasks easily learned by most people. Various levels of a particular job will be reached by persons of different abilities. The proposed model includes six steps: state purposes of agency, set objectives, identify blocks of work, delineate tasks, organize tasks into jobs and organize jobs into career ladders. (CK)

ED052424

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7/30/71

NEW CAREERS: A CHALLENGE TO ADULT EDUCATION

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APRIL, 1969

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NEW CAREERS: A CHALLENGE TO ADULT EDUCATION

One of the findings of the Kerner Commission of 1968 was the following:

> "Even more important perhaps than unemployment is the related problem of the undesirable nature of many jobs open to Negroes. Negro workers are concentrated in the lowest-skilled and lowest-paying occupations. These jobs often involve sub-standard wages, great instability and uncertainty of tenure, extremely low status in the eyes of both meaningful advancement, and unpleasant or exhausting duties.
>
> ...it is far easier to create new jobs than either to create new jobs with relatively high status and earning power, or to upgrade existing employed or partly employed workers into such better quality employment. Yet only such upgrading will eliminate the fundamental basis of poverty and deprivation among Negro families".

What, specifically does this say to adult education and adult educators?

Many things might be said - regarding both our role in creating the problem and our role in solving it - however, this paper will address itself only to our role in the solution of the problem, and to a particular strategy for solution. This strategy, the New Careers model, is not a new arrival upon the scene. The title is new, the concept of the career ladder which it espouses, however, has been with us in other forms throughout

[1] Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Otto Kerner, Chairman, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968, p. 124.

history. The craftsman's apprentice, the graduate student research assistant, the soldier promoted to rank in battle were all "new careerists" of a sort. Each learned his skills from masters, began at the lowest level and worked upward, received continued "on-the-job training", and proved his mettle under fire.

Yet, they also differed greatly from today's new careerist. They were not predominantly black, nor from rural southern backgrounds, nor were they in-migrants to a highly technological urban culture for which they were totally unprepared - either in terms of education, skills or values. They were not all from rapidly expanding urban ghettos, nor had they been rejected by most of our social institutions and caught in a web which can best be described as "that tenacious organism, the culture of poverty".[2]

What, then is new careers, and how can it help to free men incarcerated in this culture of poverty?

In the most pragmatic sense New Careers is a training program for the under or unemployed; however, it is also much more than that. It is a training program of sorts, but one which trains for careers not jobs. It is also a model: a model that was first fomulated in 1963 in a book entitled, New Careers for the Poor by Arthur Pearl and Frank Riessman.[3]

2 Harrington, Michael, The Other America, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962, p. 154.

3 Pearl, Arthur and Frank Riessman, New Careers for the Poor, New York.. The Free Press, 1965.

(3)

This volume proposed employing the poor to serve the poor; helping those who needed help most to help themselves. It also postulated a second, but not subsidiary, goal for New Careers - that of social change and the "democratization of society".

The first of two objectives has emerged as primary, or at least as more practicable. The second, which has been somewhat attenuated or ignored in most New Careers programs is worthy of note, however. Basically, this objective stated that if human service[4] agencies employed the poor, they were bound to change as greatly as their clients. This change would be accomplished through a variety of mechanisms:

(1) Professionals would be freed for more professional level work.

(2) More services could be provided at the same cost because more persons would be employed, many at less-than-professional salaries. Services, therefore, could be greatly expanded.[5]

[4] The initial thrust of New Careers has been in the human services (i.e. social service, education, etc.) realm for the following reasons: (1) the pressing need for trained personnel in these fields; (2) the jobs are less likely to be automated out of existence; (3) employing the poor to serve the poor makes for a more effective human service program as well as contributing to the eradication of unemployment.

[5] Unlike most industries, the human services industry is not limited by the market. There is no saturation point for teachers, for health workers, for social agency workers. Their limits are devised simply by the resources we are willing to allocate to them. One would be hard pressed to deny a claim that one teacher (or assistant) per twenty children, or ten children, or even one for every five children, was not better than one for every twenty-three children- if we were willing to support such an effort.

(3) By employing the poor the agency personnel, and the agencies themselves, would become more greatly sensitized to the needs, values, and life styles of this group.

Whether focus upon this objective has been lost because of agency or professional resistence, or whether it has been lost due to the changing values of the New Careerists themselves is really a secondary issue. What is of primary importance, however, is that this objective has really not been adequately planned for, and its attainment rationally programmed. It has merely been assumed (incorrectly) that it would happen. Obviously, it has not!

The first objective mentioned has been somewhat more effectively dealt with; and, since it is of greater relevance to adult educators, will receive more than a cursory examination.

The New Careers model being proposed in more current literature consists of the following criteria (sans social change):

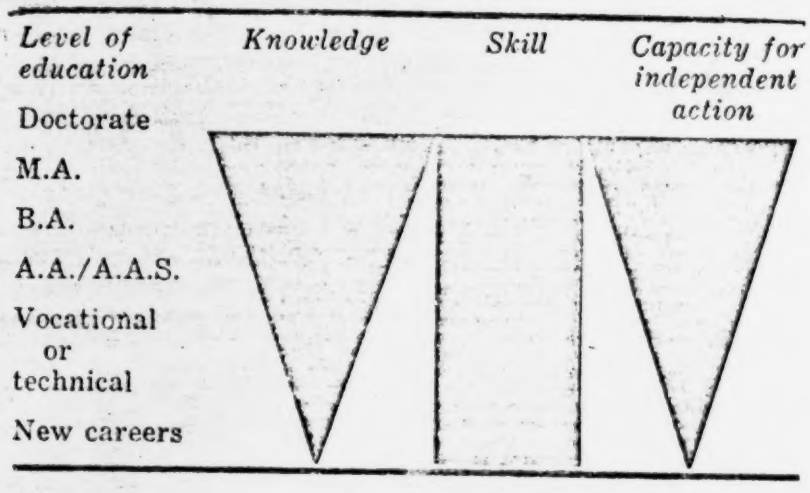
1. Entry-level positions in which new employees can be immediately productive.
2. Training integrally connected to these entry positions.
3. A genuine, explicit career ladder between the entry jobs and higher positions in the personnel hierarchy.
4. Ongoing training for higher positions available through the job as well as through training sessions scheduled in released time during the working day.
5. A close link with educational institutions which generate accredited courses on the job site and on the campus.

6. The employer assuming responsibility for organizing the total training program or subcontracting it to a training resource.

7. Planned upgrading all along the line among the presently employed workers, so that the new worker is not promoted at the expense of present personnel.[6]

At the crux of this strategy is a fundamental belief that many jobs, even those of a professional nature, can be broken down into simple, basic tasks which can be learned by most people. This does not mean to say that most people can perform professional functions, but merely that they can perform segments of these functions.

The following diagram[7] illustrates four critical components of job functions: education, knowledge, skill and capacity for independent action.



Thus, it is the skill areas upon which we are initially

[6] Riessman, Frank and Hermine L. Popper, Up From Poverty, Harper & Row Publishers, 1968, p. 9.

[7] Mase, D.J., "The Utilization of Manpower", Paper Presented to the American Public Helath Association, November 2, 1966, cited by Sheldon Steinberg & Lunice O. Shatz, "Junior Colleges and the New Careers Program", Junior College Journal, February, 1968, p. 14.

(for entry level positions) concentrating. At later stages certain individuals will progress to the highest level; others, perhaps, will not progress to the top of the career ladder but will instead remain on job levels commensurate with their ability and motivation. The opportunity, however, is available to all.

The job analysis is a primary element in the establishment of a New Careers ladder. It is important that the job content be meaningful and yet readily grasped by a relatively untrained person. This is necessitated by the new careers mandate of jobs first, training later.[8] Wretha Wiley of the New Careers development center has proposed the following systems approach to job analysis:

STEP 1: STATE PURPOSES/NEEDS OF AGENCY

The systems approach begins with the purposes and needs of a system; a clear definition of purposes/ needs is essential to the analysis. (What are the purposes of the agency? What are the unmet needs of the community?)

In order to accomplish the purposes of the agency, short-term and long-term objectives should be set.

STEP 2: SET OBJECTIVES

Objectives should be stated as policy formulations which mark the route to achieving the purpose of the system.

In order to meet objectives, major areas of work to be done must be identified.

8 This may not always be a wise policy. In some instances short-term intensive skills training may be necessary for even minimal performance.

STEP 3: IDENTITY SUBSYSTEMS

A subsystem in this case simply means a large, rather discrete block of work which must be done if the objectives of the systems are to be met.

In order to accomplish the work in each subsystem, the specific tasks which make up the subsystem must be clearly understood.

STEP 4: DELINEATE TASKS

Each task should be stated to reveal precisely and concretely what gets done (technologies) and what workers do (Worker Functions).

Upon completion of this step we have the basic raw material (tasks defined, appropriate functional levels assigned, performance standards and training curricula inferred) from which to begin to organize jobs.

STEP 5: ORGANIZE TASKS INTO JOBS

Sort out tasks on the basis of functions and group them into jobs. Many tasks in different subsystems will have the same functional level. Many options will be available depending upon the contraints (size, priorities, etc.) of the specific agency.

STEP 6: ORGANIZE JOBS INTO CAREER LADDERS

Arrange jobs by functional levels and indicate promotion/salary advancement patterns.

The jobs, once analyzed, must then be developed. The positions are not "make-work" because we have already defined the tasks as existing and necessary, but they must be created, for although the tasks exist, they do so entwined with other tasks requiring more independent thought and action, and are not grouped so as to be readily accessible to the paraprofessional.

The model as described has been implemented in a number of locales. Such implementation has been made possible

through a wide variety of legislation, the most notable being the Scheurer-Nelson amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act. This amendment, section 123 (a) (4) of Title I, Part B establishes:

> special programs which provide unemployed or low-income persons with jobs leading to career opportunities, including new types of careers, in programs designed to improve the physical, social, economic, or cultural condition of the community or area served in fields including without limitation health, education, welfare, neighborhood re-development, and public safety, which provide maximum prospects for advancement and continued employment without federal assistance, which give promise of contributing to the broader adoption of new methods of structuring jobs and new methods of providing job ladder opportunities, and which provide opportunities for further occupational training to facilitate career advancement.

Exemplary programs sponsored under the aegis of the Scheurer amendment have been formulated in Washington, D.C., Newark, N.J., Springfield, Mass., and Richmond, California. These programs have dealt with a diversity of career vocations including corrections, police, education, health and social services.[10]

The development of such projects has not been without error or misfortune, as there are some very critical problems inherent in the new careers approach. Moreover, the existence

[10] For detailed descriptions of these projects, see Riessman and Popper (eds.) Op. Cit.

of such difficulties is in and of itself an indictment of the structure of our social institutions and should be examined thoroughly.

The most significant of the problems likely to be encountered in the development of the New Careers Model are in the relationships with professionals. The problems of these relationships are usually centered in two areas: (1) initial resistance; (2) on-the-job conflict. The initial resistance is often not only presented by the individual, but also by the professional organization. A group that will probably control the all important certifying and accrediting function. Once the professional understands that the purpose of New Careers is not to replace him by the paraprofessional, but is in fact to free him for more professional tasks, individual resistance is usually overcome. However, another problem may immediately present itself. Many professionals see the new careerist merely as an aide to perform unattractive and mundane tasks. They are not always viewed as persons competent in their own right with a particular expertise and perspective to offer the agency. Hence, they may be utilized as little more than permanent apprentices.

The professional may also not sense the importance of the cross-fertilization factor in improving both his and the new careerist's performance. The professional/paraprofessional relationship should be an opportunity for mutual exchange and learning. One individual passing on the particular knowledge

and expertise gained through years of formal training and the other communicating the skills and knowledges which are common to members of his social group, but often totally foreign to the professional. Hopefully, mutual understanding and a sharing of learning experiences will flourish between the two.

Another problem which frequently presents itself is a fear on the part of the New Careerists themselves that the jobs "created" for them are either temporary accommodations to present social forces or dead-end positions in which they may be forever stranded. Both fears may be well grounded in reality! There can be no doubt that New Careers is a response to a social force (or many forces) and it is only the continued faith and trust by those who are leading and supporting the movement and those who are participating in it which can forever maintain its viability. Secondly, many of the positions thus far created have been of very limited opportunity. It is no mean task to cause a social system, especially a bureaucratic system, to radically alter set patterns. Change is threatening to the bureaucracy and to many of its members and both of the elements have the potential for mounting very effective defenses against revolution, if not even evolution. "A basic critique of the professionals", observes Frank Riessman, "is that they have developed a self-protection mystique concerning their expertise. The paraprofessional within the system may raise

questions about these practices forcing them to the light of analysis. In a sense he disrupts the usual professional equilibrium and also brings into the professional agency the voice and questions of the community. In his cross-socialization and cross-training with the professions, the paraprofessional can also have an important impact on changing professional practice and indirectly the service system".[11]

Still another set of problems are those related to the training or education facet of any New Careers program. We are not here dealing with the kinds of students who have in the past fared well in school. In fact, the complete opposite is almost universally the case. Neither the value structure, the behavioral patterns, or the cognitive style of the disadvantaged learner is that which our educational programs are designed to accommodate. He is less future-oriented and less able to defer gratification, more aggressive, more outer directed and typically projects the causes of his behavior to external stimuli. This combination makes it extremely difficult to develop introspection and to motivate a possible alteration of the existing value structure. Because of these factors, our approaches to training the New Careerist should not be based upon traditional models. The very fact that the training is so directly job related has many advantages; however, this factor alone is not adequate compensation for the counter-pressure of many negative influences.

11 Riessman, Frank, "The New Struggle for the Paraprofcssional", Social Policy, New York: New Careers Development Center, November, 1969, p. 8.

Training should be field based (conceptual training built on concrete field experiences), programmed (step-by-step), systematic (in-service training related to on-the-job experience), short- term (in the pre-job stage) and utilize a team or group mode.[12]

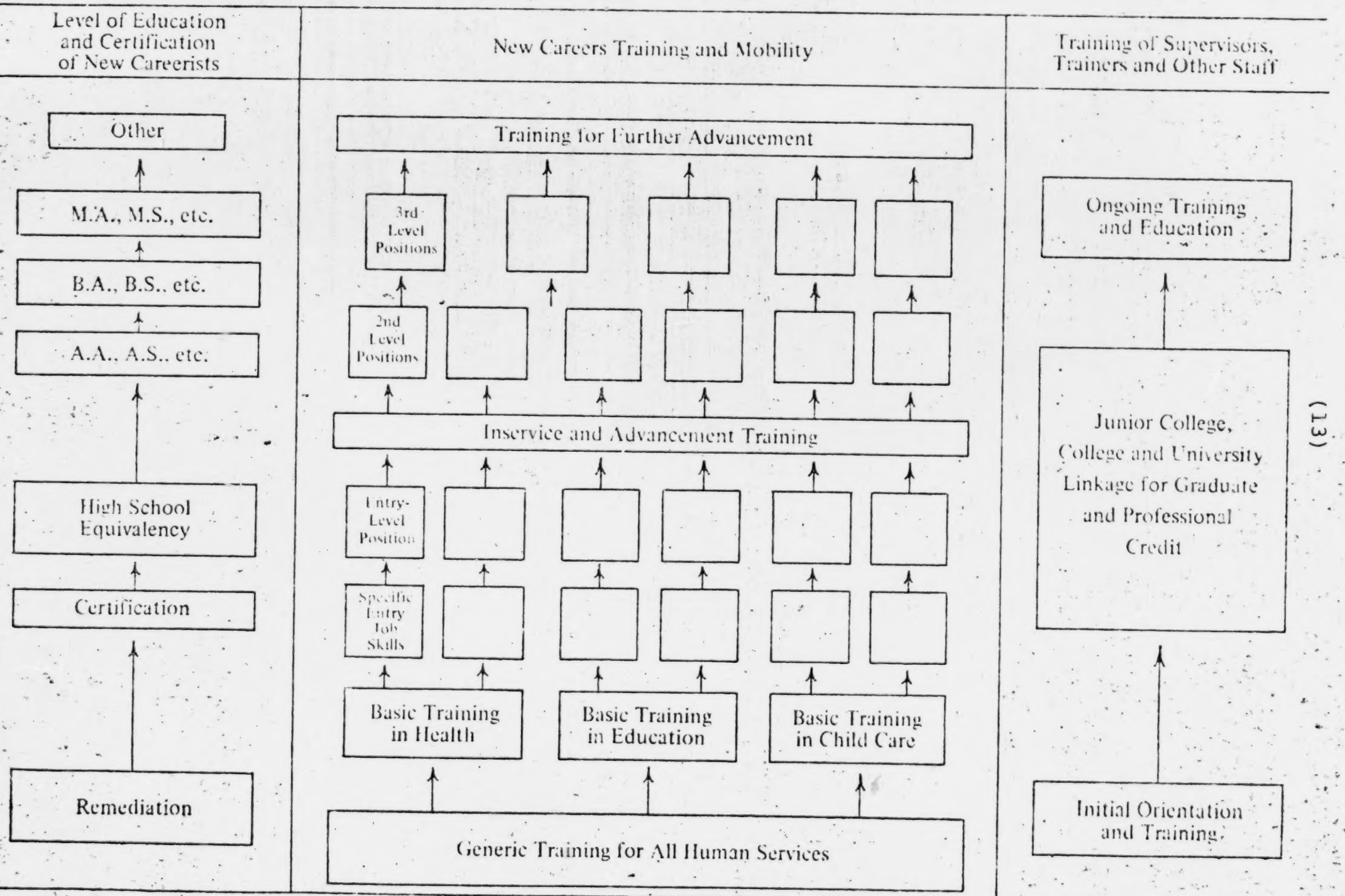
The following elements have been suggested as New Careers training guidelines:

> Teaching trainees to understand the nature and meaning of various types of behavior in different situations.
>
> Providing an understanding of the complexities of interpersonal group, and community relationships.
>
> Helping trainees develop a sense of personal and occupational identity.
>
> Helping trainees develop goals, values and attitudes that will enable them to function effectively in society.
>
> Teaching the basic general skills and viewpoints needed for all nonprofessional jobs in human services.
>
> Teaching the specialized skills essential to at least one kind of human service.
>
> Developing personal and social coping skills, such as reading and writing, needed for successful job performance.
>
> Helping trainees develop sufficient knowledge and flexibility so that they will not be confined to one job, but can transfer from one to another as opportunities for advancement arise.
>
> Helping trainees learn to accept and use supervision, and training professionals to supervise and work effecitvely with nonprofessionals.[13]

12 Riessman, Frank, New Careers, New York: A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund, undated, p. 24.

13 Klein, William, Willian Denham and Jacob Fishman, New Careers: A Manual for Trainers, Washington, D.C. : New Careers Development Program, University Research Corporation, 1968, p. 8.

TRAINING FOR NEW CAREERS


Level of Education and Certification of New Careerists
New Careers Training and Mobility
Training of Supervisors, Trainers and Other Staff
Other
M.A., M.S., etc.
B.A., B.S., etc.
A.A., A.S., etc.
High School Equivalency
Certification
Remediation
Training for Further Advancement
3rd Level Positions
2nd Level Positions
Inservice and Advancement Training
Entry-Level Position
Specific Entry Job Skills
Basic Training in Health
Basic Training in Education
Basic Training in Child Care
Generic Training for All Human Services
Ongoing Training and Education
Junior College, College and University Linkage for Graduate and Professional Credit
Initial Orientation and Training

14. Pointer, avis Y., and Jacob R. Fishman, "New Careers: Entry level training for the Human Services aide,"

In sum, the training and work aspects of a New Careers program should not be separate, and perhaps dysfunctional phases, but instead should be complementary and supportive elements which will facilitate the adjustment of the individual to his role in the organization, correct the deficiencies of previous educational experiences, convey new skills and attitudes, and provide upward mobility both within the organization and society in general.

The future for such an impossible task is, surprisingly, encouraging. Robert Kennedy, in a speech in support of the Emergency Employment Act, of the Economic Opportunity Amendments of 1967, cited the following figures to demonstrate the shortage of skilled and professional personnel in all of our social service agencies.

> In Health services, the National League of Nursing estimates a deficit of 344,000 registered nurses by 1970. Current deficit, 125,000. For that same year, mental health services predict a deficit of 200,000 employees for state and county hospitals.
>
> In social work, some 15,000 persons are needed yearly to replace those leaving the field and to staff new services. The total number of graduates from schools of social work throughout the nation is only 3,500 yearly. The HEW Task Force on Social Welfare, Education and Manpower predicts a need for 100,000 social workers plus 50,000 additional workers for HEW agencies alone by 1970.
>
> In education, the U.S. Department of Labor forsees a deficit of 500,000 elementary and secondary school teachers by 1970.15

15 Kennedy, Robert, "Government, Jobs and New Careers", in Riessman and Popper (eds.), Op. Cit., p. 20.

Moreover, there is a recognition on its part of many of these agencies that the paraprofessional may be more than a labor of charity, but may instead be an act of survival. With the advent of "demands for local community control and decentralization by militant, community based forces.... establishment groups are beginning to see the paraprofessional as a crucial link or bridge to these communities and to feel increasingly vulnerable unless they have involved representatives of the community on their own staff. They experience a great need for two-way communication with the blacks and to some extent they want to incorporate elements of the community into their structures".[16]

In addition to the reasons elaborated, new avenues of exploration for the New Careers concept are evolving. The private sector, by far this nations largest employer, has not, to date, become truly involved, and yet, the new careers model proffers an excellent opportunity to resolve the critical problem of a shortage of skilled manpower. Adjustments to the concept must inevitably be made to adapt it to the needs of industry, however, if private corporations have been willing to spend vast amounts for the upgrading of their present employees, why should they not expand and enhance their efforts to include new employees. Many industries have conducted training programs or even entire job corps centers in the past. Perhaps the

16. Pinsman, "The New Struggle for the Paraprofessional", Op. Cit., p. 2

failures of some of these programs may have been averted with the use of the New Careers concept.

We have thus far spoken of the New Careers model as applicable to a generalized group labeled the "disadvantaged". However, since generalizations are seldom completely accurate it might be valuable to identify some specific groups who might benefit by the program. Two, in particular, come to mind. (1) the returning Viet Nam veteran, who finds the opportunities awaiting him not vastly different from those he left behind before he entered the service ----- except that he now, most likely, has acquired a few basic skills, has incorporated the value of further education, has some financial support in the form of the G.I. Bill, and is less likely to be satisfied with a menial, dead-end job (and more likely to say or do something about it); (2) the older worker who is planning upon retirement, but who still desires to contribute to society in an active and meaningful way. As Alan Gartner so cogently states "While the boundaries between work and study are most often seen as a problem of youth, - they also effect..in almost a mirror image of their impact upon youth -- the older person. For our system most often allows a person but 'one ride on the carousel,' but one opportunity for protracted study and preparation for work. The system is a linear three step process -- preparation for work, the work itself and then, retirement and/or death. Having made a commitment to a particular course of preparation and work,

an individual rarely has the opportunity to enter into a new line of work".[17]

Mr. Gartner also points out another problem, and one which brings us to the role of the adult educator and the adult education agency in the New Careers movement. He further states: "the opportunity for new preparation is rarely avilable under conditions necessary for adults."[18] The conditions necessary are not merely classes scheduled during the evening hours. They include a sensitized faculty, a restructured learning experience, relevant education concurrent with meaningful jobs which provide career ladder opportunities, financial support, and, most of all, the commitment of a large number of individuals and agencies.

The commitment from adult educators should be made in terms of training opportunities, employment opportunities,[19] and proselytization. We are in a unique position to lend "establishment" support to a new and struggling concept, bits and pieces of which exist, but which demands a national effort of unification and planning. Sumner M. Rosen, in a presentation at

17 Gartner, Alan, "The Older American: New Work, New Training, New Careers", A Paper Prepared for the 13th Annual Southern Conference on Gerontology, Institute on Gerontology, University of Floriday, Gainsville, Florida, January, 1969. (mimeographed)

18 Ibid.

19 Mercer County Community College currently employs a New Careerist as a Community Service Representative.

the University ofWisconsin in the Summer of 1968 literally "threw the gauntlet" to his audience of adult educators. In his concluding remarks he stated: "If you make your fight and identify yourselves as agents for this kind of change in education, you will have the support of those forces in the ghetto who now look upon you, and upon all people who have made it, as the enemy. They will begin to see the connection between what you do and what they must do, and you will begin to become relevant again to the lives of the immigrants who once before and once again will make this nation or break it. I think it is a challenge that you can understand, I hope it is one that you can accept."[20]

I am firm in the belief that adult education will accept Mr. Rosen's challenge and will join the national coalition of professional and paraprofessionals which Riessman and Popper[21] declare necessary for the development and fruition of the New Careers movement. I am certain that adult educators on all levels ---high school and post-high school, in church affiliated and social service agencies --- will explore the ways in which they can actively support and serve the New Careers movement, and will adopt and maintain a firm commitment to this new and promising model for adult education.

20 Rosen, Sumner, M., "An Introduction to New Careers," A Paper Based On a Speech to the Adult Education Summer Conference, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, July 1, 1966.

21 Riessman and Popper, Op. Cit., p. 320.

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NOTE: For further information regarding New Careers, including potential funding sources, contact The New Careers Development Center at New York University or the University Research Corporation in Washington, D.C.